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THE CELT'S PARADISE.

THE

CELT'S PARADISE,

IN FOUR DUANS.

BY

JOHN BANIM,

AUTHOR OF "DAMON AND PYTHIAS," ETC.

"What dreams may come!"

Shakespeare.

NEW YORK.

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METRICAL Dialogues, purporting to have occurred between Ossian (or Ossin) and St. Patrick, are, to this day, recited by the old peasantry of the North and South of Ireland; and specimens of them have been for some time before the public, in Miss Brooks' translation of "Reliques of Irish Poetry." A recollection of one or other, or both of these circumstances, unconsciously suggested the opening situation of the following poem.

An illustrious Scots poet, who condescended to bestow some flattering and advantageous criticism on the first manuscript of the "Celt's Paradise," thought the tale like "a tradition of the amour between the prophetic poet, Thomas the Rhymer, and the Queen of the Fairies." Such similarity will, of course, be apparent to the general reader; and the Author takes leave to mention it only for the purpose of saying, that the "Celt's Paradise" was written before he had

ever heard of the story to which that illustrious poet has done him the honor of alluding. He begs to add that, though in the following pages Ossian appears surrounded with Irish connections exclusively, and though the "hall of Allen" is substituted for that of "woody Morven," these and other accompaniments were adopted, rather for the sake of poetical consistency, than with any reference to the justice of their appropriation in a local or national point of view.

TO

THE RIGHT HON. LORD CLONCURRY,

AS A SMALL TRIBUTE OF

THE AUTHOR'S ADMIRATION

OF

HIS LORDSHIP'S

PUBLIC SPIRIT AND LOVE OF COUNTRY,

THE FOLLOWING POEM

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED.

THE

CELT'S PARADISE.

FIRST DUAN.

OSSIAN.

Man of prayers, lead me forth
From our silent cell of care,
The morning-breeze to me is worth
All thy hymns and all thy prayer—
For dark and lonely have we prayed—
Our psalms are sung, our penance said—
Thou hast told me, I am forgiven,
And I long to live in the smile of heaven.

I cannot see the holy light,
But I feel it on my brow of white—
I cannot see the young bird soaring,
But I hear the song his pride is pouring—
I cannot see the laughing water,
Nor the fresh beauty the sun has brought her;
I only hear the moan she is making,
Over her bed of pebbles breaking.

Man of prayers, lead me on—
Lead the son of Comhal's son,
To the hill where his early deeds were done—
Lead me to Slieve Gullian's breast,
And give me there my mournful rest.
Ossian longs to lie alone
And think of days and dangers gone—
The darkened soul of Ossian longs
To float on the stream of other songs
Than those thy altar bells are ringing,
And thy white-robed Culdees singing.

This is the place—I know it now,
I feel its freshness on my brow!
Lead me where the sun is brightest,
Where the storm-washed stone is whitest,
And there in solitude let me sit
As silent and as lorn as it!

Yield me now my sad request,
Leave me—leave me to my rest.

Dark and dread King! Ruler alone!
Deep stream that we think not is passing on,
And yet it goes forward and is gone,——
Where, O Time! is thy hidden source,
When wilt thou rest thee from thy course?——

A pilgrim art thou on thy path.
And thou hast the solitude he hath ;
Thy step is alone by the dark deep river,
And forward thou walkest ever and ever !
But art thou of thyself—Alone
From thine own power ?—Or has one
More awful still the staff supplied,
That props thee in thy walk of pride,
And bade thy stream for ever flow,
And pointed thee the way to go ?—
Stern and relentless is thy sway !—
And withering as the worms of the clay
Thy kisses are !—At thy dark coming
The waters of the heart grow chill—
Thy breath her wildest wish benumbing,
And bidding her proudest throb be still !—
Thou walkest forth into the wild
And at thy touch the forest-king
Bows his wreathed head !—She who hath smiled
In beauty's blush, the loveliest thing
Of all—thy finger passeth over
Her cheek, and what remains behind !
Thou shroudest in thy mantle's cover
The highest hero of his kind—
In his last house thou hid'st him then,
And why should we say he lived ? Thou changest
To wilds the fair abodes of men,
And in the wilderness once again
A pile of palaces thou rangest——

Where chiefs among their thousands trod,
And thousands worshipped at their nod,
  There hast thou spread the stagnant waters—
There hast thou sent the creeping thing
To hiss, and the heron to flap his wing——
  And once where Beauty's laughing daughters
Had their bright bower, there hast thou made
For the lone fox a hiding-shade—
A solitude no prayer may bless—
A place of fear and loneliness!

The solid earth and roaring ocean
  Obey the biddings of thy voice!—
Where valleys smiled the river is in motion,
  And his dimpling waters all rejoice!
And where the proud sea often broke
His swelling waves in ceaseless shock,
There hast thou bade the green grass shoot,
And the tall tree settle and get root!

  And more than this thou hast to do!—
The rugged rocks and the mountains blue
  Must crumble and fall!—
The stars must fade as words from a page,
And the light of the world wander in age!—
He must end his proud career on high,
  And fail—and, gathered in thy pall,
He must shut for ever his radiant eye!

Link after link thy chain creeps fast
Around the world ; it will close at last :
And all things then will be fettered by thee,
And lonely and stern will thy triumph be!

THE SAINT.

Ossian, then too our triumphs come
Over death, and time, and the tomb—
Then shall we win with effort free,
Over the victors, victory.

OSSIAN.

Man of prayers, why return
To quench the thought that fain would burn?
I am old and most forlorn,
And my only rapture is to mourn.
I know the grave is dark and deep,
Yet I wish I had its pleasant sleep.

THE SAINT.

Ossian, the grave is only dark
For him whose spirit feels no spark
Of Christian sorrow for the sin
He long has lived and wantoned in :
But he who prays, and hopes, and fears,
And for his life sheds bitter tears,
In other worlds shall win more bliss
Than he may think or dream in this.

OSSIAN.

I know as well as thou, the brave
Have endless pleasures past the grave.
Good chiefs and warriors dwell for ever
On the banks of a pleasant river,
Or walk with ever-blushing maids
Thro' flowery fields and scented shades,
Or hunt the hart o'er dale and hill,
Or in their bowers sit calm and still.

THE SAINT.

The joys of heaven thou hast not told;
Nor is it for the brave and bold
Its golden gates of love unfold:
The good alone, or weak, or strong,
May sing in heaven their holy song,
And good can only come to thee
From Christian creed and charity.

OSSIAN.

And for this, must prayers be read,
And beads be told, and matins said?
And he that doth not this, and more,
Must he never touch that shining shore
Of joy thou preachest?—And where then
Are all those stern and mighty men,

Whose steps were on their own green hills,
In their own strength?—And where are they,
The sources of the blood that fills,
Or once has filled, in manhood's day,
My swelling veins?—Say, Psalmist, say,
Where are Finn and Comhal now?
And thou, the darling of my lay—
The child of all my love! whose brow
Was bright and beautiful as day,—
Osgur—my son!—where, where art thou?
Man of prayers, would'st teach me this?
And think'st thou I could share a bliss
Unshared with them? To be alone
In a strange heaven, unloved, unknown,
As I am now, and have no breast
To slumber on and give me rest—
This may be joy, old man, to thee—
But, oh! it were dreary and dark for me!

THE SAINT.

God hath his mercies. They who went
Down to the grave before he sent
His word to warn them of the way,—
For them he doth not bid me say
Exclusion from eternal day.

OSSIAN.

Man of prayers, I wish not
The raptures of thy cloudless lot.

Enjoy thy heaven. I know where lies
Old Ossian's only paradise!—
'Tis with the beautiful and brave,
Beyond the wild and wailing wave
Of this cold world. The summer there
Is cloudless, calm, and ever fair.
I saw it once!—My 'wakened blood
At that one thought rolls back the flood
Of age and sorrow, and swells up
Like old wine sparkling o'er its cup.
I'll tell thee of the time I spent
Beneath that cloudless firmament,
And thou shalt judge if aught could be
So pure a paradise to me—
If by my own frail spirit led
Its smile I had not forfeited.——
Give me the old Clarseech I hung
On my loved tree; so long unstrung,
Even to its master's measure free
It may refuse its minstrelsy:
But give it—and the song, tho' cold,
May kindle at a thought of old—
Of younger days; and now and then
It may be strong and bright again.
Hear a song of age's daring—
The sighings of the harp of Erin!
Waken, thou warbler of the West!
Waken from thy long, long rest!

All day we chased the dark-brown deer
Thro' woods and wilds and waters clear:
We broke the dew on Allen's breast,
And we met the evening on his crest.
Like that weak beam, I was alone
With the whispering breeze and the whitened stone;
It was an hour of doubtful light—
Half was sunshine, half was night;
And the moon, like maiden young and coy,
Half struggling with a bashful boy,
Was flickering over the calm clear stream
That yet blushed red in the evening beam.
I heard upon the echoes borne,
A faint and far-off hunting-horn.
At the shrill sound my steed, though spent,
Pricked up his ears and forward went,
Hoping with me once more to gain
A party of our hunting train.

Forward we went. The horn grew shrill
And shriller. See!—from yonder hill
What floating form of virgin fair—
So delicate, it looks like air—
Comes sweeping on at utmost speed,
Low bending to her snowy steed?
The dogs are straining on before her—
Her train is descending the mountain o'er her—
In her wild flight no echo wakes
To tell the bound her courser takes—

The winter's wind when it is high,
The fire flash glancing thro' the sky,
Or the torrent in his rudest race,
Are not so rapid as that chase!

Aghast I stood! The dogs dashed by—
The lady-huntress next swept nigh—
A moment in her magic speed
She slightly curbed her milky steed,
And looked upon me. Oh that look
Into my heart of hearts I took!
Nay, scoff not Psalmist—for by the light
That now for Ossian no more is bright,
I tell thee that one look of her's
Would make thy saints idolaters!—
When April's evening sky is fair,
If its golden folds uncurtained were,
All but a misty veil unriven
Between thee and thy own bright heaven—
And if thro' it young angel eyes
Beamed o'er thee in thy ecstacies,
To tell of pardon for thy sin,
And give thee peace and smile thee in—
It would be like the glance she sent
On me in my astonishment!

And 'twas enough! I gave the rein—
My steed forgot his toil and pain,
And on we swept o'er hill and plain!—

On, on—thro' heath, and stream, and wood—
We climbed the bank—we broke the flood—
But all was mockery to the flight
Of the lady on her steed of white!
I see her on the steep hill's brow—
I gain it—she sweeps thro' the valley now—
Over the valley's breast I strain,
But she has ascended the hill again!
Like winding rivers quick and bright,
She glanced and faded on my sight:
At last within a brown wood's shade
A headlong plunge her courser made,
And I, far off, was left to gaze
In mute distraction and amaze.

Even then her train—a fearful crowd—
Came rushing on; looks strange and proud
Flashed for a moment on my face—
Then turned to track that noiseless chase—
For as I looked no echoing sound
Gave answer to their coursers' bound,
And the rushing of the winds alone
Told that a hunter had passed on.

I feared them not, tho' well I knew
They were not things of earth! I drew
And firmly clutched my own good blade;
One last wild race my courser made,

Tho' spent and reeling. On, still on,
Thro' tangled shades and wilds unknown
He bore me well—nor sigh, nor groan,
When down he softly sunk at last,
From the proud beast lamenting past.
I made him a couch of the branches green,
And he had for his shelter the forest screen—
I brought him fresh grass gathered near,
And in my helmet water clear—
I smoothed and bathed his drooping crest,
And left him to his soothing rest.

I sat in the tall tree's trembling shade,
And the moss of its trunk my pillow made.
My eyes could not their watching keep,
My soul was sinking in its sleep,
And wild and wavering thoughts came on
Of deeds imagined, actions done,
And vain hopes mingling with the true,
And real things a man may do.
A sigh came o'er me soft and warm!
I started!—but nor shade nor form
Appeared thro' the half-seen gloom around
To utter such a silver sound.
It might be the sob of the summer air
Which glowed so rich and sultry there.
Again I slumbered—again the sigh
Of woman's fondness fluttered nigh—

And while I listened, gentle lips
  Gently met mine,—and touched, and trembled,—
As if beneath the moon's eclipse
  Alone, love's feeling long dissembled,
Might dare to own in bashful kisses
Its maiden flame and modest blisses.

  Fondly I raised my arms and press'd,—
They closed upon my lonely breast.
Back from their kiss the young lips started—
Sighed one rich sigh—and touched, and parted—
I thought of the huntress young and fair,
Whose gifted glance had led me there,
And I said in the strength of my young heart's sigh,
While the tear of passion brimmed mine eye—
"Lady of kisses! Lip of love!
From the air around, or sky above,
Come and bless my desolate arms
With the richness of thy charms."

"Son of Earth!" a small voice said,
  So soft it might be the west wind
Murmuring thro' a garden bed,
  And fraught with feeling, heart and mind,
And lip, and language, to declare
Its love for any floweret fair—
"Son of Earth! thy sigh is vain,
'Till thou can'st join our hunting train,
Free from earthly touch or stain.

And if thou hast wish to hunt with me,
Three days shalt thou silent be—
Three days and nights thou shalt not sleep—
Nor sigh, nor smile—nor laugh, nor weep—
Nor warm thy wish with earthly food—
Nor slake thy thirst with earthly flood.
When thou dost this for love of me,
Again sleep under the wild-wood tree,
And pleasant shall thy waking be."

"Child of the breeze!—where—who art thou?
Let me see thy lovely brow!"

"Viewless I am, and must be, till
Thy three days' task thou dost fulfil.
I am of the people of the hill—
A Sidhéé spirit, pure and free
From all the cares that 'cumber thee.
I live in a land where the blushing light
Is always constant, calm, and bright;
Grief is not there, nor age, nor death,
But evergreen youth, and endless breath,
And life that tires not with the living,
And love that loathes not with the giving.
Stern sons of men who struggling die
In Virtue's cause, or Freedom's high,
Come there across the waste of water,
Guided by a Sidhéé's daughter,

And live at leisure calm and free,
To follow what their wish may be.
Son of Finn! could'st thou forsake
The hills that now thy pleasure make,
Defying death, and the care and pain
That here for thy old white hairs remain,
And come to live with love and me,
In such a land of liberty?"

"Voice of softness! Cans't thou love me?
Thou art a beam too far above me.
I'd fly with thee thro' the waste of water,
The raging flame, or the field of slaughter,
Thro' deserts where man no footing finds—
Thro' all the waves and all the winds!
Dost thou love me, child of light?—
Is Ossian pleasant in thy sight?"

"The sigh that broke thy gentle sleep
Might teach thy tongue its word to keep.
Return, fair Ossian, to thy hill;
I will be here to love thee still."

SECOND DUAN.

I WENT and came. The wild-wood tree
Again spread out my canopy.
I could not sleep. I sat in grief
And listen'd to the rustling leaf.
She came not o'er me as before—
No murmuring breeze her whispers bore—
No timid touch of her soft lip
From mine its kisses now would sip.
A far-off sigh alone I heard,
Like the night-wind thro' the thistle's beard.
"Why wilt thou shun me, child of bliss?—
I come to claim thy promised kiss."

"Thou comest to claim, but hast not done
Thy promise like a faithful one.
This morn thy sister, who hath wept
Because thy soft sleep was unslept,
In Allen's stately hall held up,
With sighs and smiles, the parting-cup,
And thou didst taste the blushing wine,
And therefore art no love of mine.
Come back again, and with thee bring
A lip unstain'd by earthly thing."

Sad I returned. That night I slept,
And eat and drank, and wildly wept;
But thence three days and nights I waked—
My feast untouched, my thirst unslaked—
And again beneath the wild tree's shade
I call'd in sighs my aërial maid.
And farther off her voice replied—
"Tho' thou hast neither smiled nor sigh'd,
Nor furled in sleep thy sorrow's wing,
Nor eat nor drank of earthly thing,
Yet, as this morning at the gate
Thy sister stood all desolate,
And prayed of thee a parting kiss,
Thou, all unmindful of the bliss
That warms a purer cheek and breast,
Didst yield the girl her fond request.
Come back again, and with thee bring
A lip unstain'd by earthly thing."

I did return, and with me brought
The unstain'd lip the spirit sought.
I sat in sleep beneath that tree—
Sweet sleep that came on suddenly—
Her warm wild sigh stole o'er me then,
And woo'd me to my thought again;—
I felt a cheek of tenderest touch
Laid gently to the burning blush
That mantled mine;—I felt young arms
Steal round and round me, and all the charms

Of a fond, fluttering, loving breast
To mine in murmuring raptures press'd.

"From this fond and free caress,
Wake, Son of Earth, thy sleep to bless,—
Wake to the joy of breathing free—
The breath of immortality!"

It was too much—too keen a pleasure
For a mere mortal heart to measure!
My sinews thrilled—my breathing went—
My laboring pulse its throbbings spent,
And my soul faded into night,
Darkening in its own delight.

I woke as men from doubtful dreams
In the broad sun's real beams
Oft waken to look back with fright
Upon their phantoms of the night.
The life I led, the days gone by,
I thought of, dark and doubtingly.
It was not an action or a scene
In which I felt I might have been—
Rather some unsubstantial play
Of fancy in her holiday.
A brighter thought came to my tongue—
A livelier life within me sprung—
A fresher current of young blood
Sent to my heart its thrilling flood,

And my lightened limbs disdained to rest
On the cold earth's cloddy breast.

I woke upon a wild sea-shore—
The waste was round the sky was o'er:
My head was cradled on her knee,
And there she watched me silently,
Like the sun shining on a flower
That all alone lives thro' its hour
In some forsaken wilderness.
I woke and woo'd her heart's caress,
And she did give it wild and free
As her kiss beneath the forest tree.
And I felt with her and she with me—
My thoughts were hers, and mutually
I had her thinkings—heart in heart
And mind in mind together blended,
Like streams that cannot live apart,
But in one glassy lake have ended.

And shining and soft was her virgin form,
In full-blown beauty wild and warm.
I know not if aught of earthly blood
Mingled with the magic flood
That feeds her veins; but you might see
A rich vein wandering sportively
Beneath the bright transparent skin,
That kept its sparkling essence in.

'Twas an earthly shape, but polish'd too high
For an earthly touch or an earthly eye.
'Twas an earthly shape! What else could be
Moulded or made to rapture me?
What other form could loveliness take
To bid my doating eye-balls ache,
And boil my blood, and fire my brain
In agonies of blissful pain?
Nay, Saint, I pass thy word of scorn—
Thyself hath sung this very morn
Of beautiful and blushing things,
With golden hair and snowy wings—
Fair beyond minstrel's fancyings—
Who, moulded like to forms of earth
Even in thy own heaven have birth,
Tho' basking in such holy light
Hath made them look more soft and white.

I tell thee, there she sat with me,
Fairer than earthly woman may be;
And she floated before my fainting glance,
Like the shapes of air that softly dance
Round the glorious evening sun,
In joy that his daily task is done.
Her eye was large, and soft, and dark,
Floating in fondness; often a spark
Of mild and chasten'd light shone thro';
And it was even as a drop of dew

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Half seen within a darken'd bower,
In the morning misty hour;
And you might know that underneath
All of her that did look or breathe
There was a spirit pure and chaste
As ice upon the unsunned waste,
Or silver waters underground
That the searching day has never found.

And she looked on me, and I on her—
Each glance the other's worshipper—
A long, long look—an endless stream
Of ever-gushing love—a beam
Unbroken as the lonely one
For ever flowing from the sun.
And I know not how—for years come on,
And mind and memory half are gone,
And things that in our morning youth
Seem'd strong and durable as truth
In age's twilight fade away
To shapeless shades, and will not stay.
I know not how—but we have broke
The chains of that dear dream, and woke
And left that solitary shore
To laugh amid the billow's roar!

Yes! swift as the wild wind that gives it its motion,
We traveled the waste of the desolate ocean—

And how proudly I rode on the back of the billow,
With her lip for my kiss and her breast for my pillow!

We came to a land where the light of the world
Hath brightest his standard of summer unfurled.
We touch it—we pass it—we traverse its scope
Like the glancing of thought or the gleamings of hope!

I have no memory of the things
I saw or met in that fearful flight—
They only make strange visitings
To my sleeping thoughts in a dream of night.
Yet half I remember, as we pass'd
A desert of sand outstripping its blast,
Of savage shapes and forms of fear
That came to look on us too near;
And the hungry glaring of their eyes
Half yielded to a stern surprise
To see such rapid travelers there,
Or hear us hurrying thro' the air.

And on! The blue hills backward fly—
Trees, rocks, and the world and all glance by!
And once, as I gave a farewell look
To the old sun I had forsook,
He seem'd as if rushing down the sky
To drink the depths of the ocean dry,
And finish his long and lonely reign,
And never light up the world again.

On, on! And we came to the last cold shore
That aged sun is shining o'er.
It was a scene of feature wild—
Its rocks in random ruin piled—
And towers of ice and hills of snow,
Mocking the wither'd waste below.
Yet there, all beautiful and bright,
The sun was shedding his chasten'd light.
It seem'd as if faithless trees and flowers,
That vary with the varying hours,
And eyes and cheeks that change at will,
And worldly hearts, more fickle still,
Had tired him with their dull deceit,
And he no more would lend them heat,
Or light, or life—but thither came
To shine on things that, cold and tame,
And shapeless, and strange as they might be,
Smiled always in white constancy.
And there, away from house and tower,
He spent his silent noon-tide hour
All sportively: his soft beam fell
On many a glancing icicle,
And kindled up each crystal height
With rainbow hue and chequer'd light.
And I thought he wished no other eye
To gladden at a scene so high,
But all in solitude smiled to see
The play of his own pleasantry.

On, on! That spangling scene is pass'd,
And we have left the world at last!
I cannot tell you if we went
Upward or down—thro' firmament,
Or wind or water—air or light;
It was even as a vision of night,
When youthful hearts that pant for heaven
Dream of some rich and rosy even,
Upon whose perfumed breeze they rise,
Like the mist of the hill in summer skies.
I saw not, touch'd not aught but her
Who was my bosom's comforter
In that rash flight. Enough for me
To feel her clasp me tenderly,
And with her kisses call from death
The flutterings of my failing breath.

Oh then! in what a keen delight
We shot upon our airy flight—
Like the lone comet, calm and fair,
Cleaving the silent realms of the air!
I said I knew not aught was there—
Nor saw a shape, nor heard a sound
In all the voiceless space around—
Yet have I thought—a half-dreamt thought—
That far and doubtingly I caught,
While in our rush of silence hurled,
A parting glance of my native world.

The stars were up, and, weak and small,
They twinkled round a darken'd ball ;
I strove to fix them on my sight,
And, as I looked, their points of light
Lengthen'd to lines, that quick and slight
Traversed each other, and entwined
Like a maiden's tresses in the wind—
And still I look, and still they glance,
And mingle in their misty dance—
And faint and fainter, and now they fly—
And now they fail, and now they die—
And they and the spot they woke to light
Have melted from my swimming sight!
One earthly sigh I gave to part
From the world that warmed my youthful heart.

And on, and on!—But how or where?
I felt no motion in the air,
And I think no breeze was busy there–
But I was swathed as in a mist
That the morning sunbeam has not kiss'd—
And I was hurled as in a wind
That all but leaves a thought behind.

On, on! And have we not touch'd at last
Some gentle substance as we pass'd?
I thought our flight less fearful now.
And I looked upon my Spirit's brow

To read its smile. Oh well I knew
My own heart's thought reflected true!
And smoother still we glide along—
Smooth as the gushing flow of song.
The velvet sod we press at last—
The gathered mist aside is cast—
And arm in arm, and hand in hand,
We wander thro' her own bright land!

THIRD DUAN.

THE SAINT.

Ossian, enough of this dotard theme,
Lit up at the meteor-blaze of a dream,
Wanton and vain as ever was fann'd
By the deadly zeal of the evil one's hand.

OSSIAN.

Man of prayers, and dost thou dare
To say to Ossian he was not there?

THE SAINT.

I tell thee, Ossian, it was a vain
And wicked vision of thy brain,
Coming in sleep from thoughts of sin,
That wantoned thy waking soul within;
And dark and agéd as thou art,
And withered as is thy wayward heart,

Fitter were it, old man, for thee
To pray on bare and bended knee,
And tell thy blesséd rosary,
Than here upon this blasted hill
To sing thy song of weakness still.
Arise and walk! The sloping sun
Hath half his daily business done,
And we are warned of penance unsped,
And psalms unsung, and prayers unread.

OSSIAN.

Away! and leave me to my wrath;
No other vengeance Ossian hath
For all the slanders of thy tongue,
And the tears of shame thy words have rung
From his old heart. Away—away!
And were it but an earlier day,
That word, false Saint, thou durst not say!
Oh, Osgur! my heart's darling son,
Thy father's deeds are all undone!
He is in darkness, and must hear
The word of shame come on his ear,
And he may not raise a sword or spear!
The last of all the Fenian race
Sits on his own hill in disgrace!
But were he here, or were there one
Of all my heroes that are gone,

Thou lying slanderer of the brave,
The sod thou stand'st on were thy grave!
And did'st thou, darest thou talk to me
Of speaking—thinking falsity?
And speak I of Osgur? Man of prayers,
I care not for these old white hairs.
Roll off the cloud that closes o'er me—
Let me but see thee stand before me—
Break this staff, and in my hand
Let me feel my father's brand—
Then might'st thou wish thy prayers read,
Thy shriving o'er, and thy penance sped!

THE SAINT.

A wayward penitent to me,
I fear me, Ossian, thou wilt be.
I said not, I wished not to say
A word to steal thy fame away.
I must believe that for thy race
There is but one pure dwelling-place—
I must believe that soul or spirit
No sense of mortal touch inherit—
And this I must, if I have faith
In Him who died to conquer death,
And hope, with Him, in light to be,
A measureless eternity.
Thou hast thy creed, and I have mine;
And if I will not bow to thine,

How do I err to them or thee
But as thyself hath erred to me?
Ossian, the Fenii's fame is high,
Their deeds are sung, and can never die;
Strong were they on their hills of power,
And happy was their peaceful hour.
They have failed on earth as the sun goes down
Over Slieve Gullian's craggy crown,
When he leaves the world he smiled upon,
Warm with the light of his glories gone.

OSSIAN.

Free be thy faith; and I rejoice
To hear in peace thy harmless voice.
Well hast thou spoken. Man of age!
Our whole race was one spreading page
Of truth and whiteness—free from stains
As the bounding blood within their veins.
Nay, rest we here. 'Tis very long
Since Ossian gave his soul to song.
I know the sun hath soared his fling,
Now pointing to earth his golden wing;
Yet, if thou wilt but list my lay,
A double penance will I say
For this upon my shriving day.

A dream it was not. Well I know
How short a way our visions go,

To give us half the living bliss,
I quaffed upon her virgin kiss!

And now we are in her land of love,
With a light below and a sky above,
And such a breathing life around,
And such a mingling of soft sound,
I have no words to tell the thought
With which my fainting soul is fraught!
And if I had, what pulse could beat—
What bright'ning brow could flush with heat,
And give the smile to the bard so dear,
And only age and coldness here?
Ask me if the flowers were fair—
Ask me if the sighing air
Was soft and pleasant—I will say
Thou think'st but of an earthly day,
And earthly flowers, and air, and skies,
And makest with them my Paradise.

But seek not on cold and earthly things
To fetter thy imaginings,
If thou would'st wish one glimpse to win
Of that pure heaven I have been in.
Lie on the green hill's sunny side,
And listen to the dashing tide—
Let the flowers be blushing nigh thee,
And lay thy harp in slumbers by thee,

Save that, now and then, thy finger
On some small chord will love to linger,
Which, chance and fancy half inspiring,
Thy softened soul is gently firing—
Then, while the evening-beam blushes red,
And the high grass is waving o'er thy head,
And thine eyes are half closed in the rosy light,
And thy thoughts within are sparkling bright—
Then may'st thou image some floating scene
Like that lovely land where I have been!

Yet it wanted not its own wild hill,
The spreading tree, and the silver rill—
The silent lake, the stretching shore,
And the hoarseness of the torrent's roar—
Scenes which the true bard loves to see,
Whether on earth or in heaven he be.
And ever its gentle rivers glided
Thro' fields of flowers, which they divided
As the minstrel-measure parts in song
The flowers his fancy strays among.
And its small flowers were always fair,
And soft to the touch as summer air;
Their only business was to live,
And to the breeze their perfumes give,
And in return the breezes crept
Into their bosoms while they slept,
And left them all the sweets they found
In their flight the world around.

I know not whence the day-beam came,
But it was ever and ever the same—
A living light that streamed for ever
On hill and mountain, lake and river :
Without a burst, without a shade,
One mild and virgin day it made—
In which on sultry breeze could blast,
Nor cloud nor tempest overcast,
Nor sullen mist its damp distill,
Nor wild wind rave, nor winter chill.

I say not that the young eyes there
Made that modest light less fair.
It might be that one roving ray
First called a love-look into day,
And from two starry eyes drew forth
A freshened glow and added worth—
And these eyes looked on other eyes,
And kindled up new brilliances—
And other eyes still woke each other,
And every soft beam had a brother,
'Till, mingling quick and flashing wide,
The gathered radiance gave its tide—
And blushing cheeks, and blushing flowers
Richly mellowed its dazzling powers,
And lake and river, air and sky,
For ever made it multiply.

I think such might be the mingled ray
That there gave out its pleasant day,
For it seemed to glitter a little less
When my loved one slept in gentleness ;
And the only faint fading of that light,
Which gave but the calmness of earthly night,
Was when a thousand eyes were sleeping
Unearthly sleep, that had been keeping
The day so fresh and fair about them,
It could not be day or light without them.

There was a voice throughout the air
That spoke of soul and spirit there—
And ever as you breathed its sigh,
I may not name the thinkings high
That o'er your mind in freshness stole,
And wildly woke the startled soul.
And it made minstrelsy, and spoke
Language that bards all vainly invoke
When they would tell of words half broken,
With the river-spirit spoken,
Or catch from the careering breeze
Its darkly-whispered mysteries.

And all was music—air and sky
And water—and the harmony
Of what was spoken—and the song
Of shining birds, that in a throng
Their distant warblings would prolong.

Then it was most pleasant to see
The innocent creatures there that be,
Sitting or walking joyously
In their bower or thro' their shade—
Bard and warrior, youth and maid,
Each happy as he wished to be
In all the range of liberty.
Young eyes were ever glancing round—
Eyes that never wept or frowned—
And the laugh of those happy hearts was like
Strains that enraptured minstrels strike,
In one full and bursting measure,
When they give their souls to sound and pleasure.

All were happy—but some felt
A holier joy, and others dwelt
In higher glory. I saw one
Who, for the good deeds he had done
On earth, was here a worshipped king,
Triumphant o'er all suffering.
On the utmost edge of his own shore,
One foot amid the breaker's roar,
Another on the rocky strand,
He met the invading foe—his hand
Grasp'd its good sword. He was alone,
And they were thousands; and when flown
His strength at last, he could but throw
Between his country and the foe

His heart, and thro' it bid them smite
At her's.

He fell ; but in the light
Of Paradise the hero's deed
Found fittest eulogy and meed ;
The gaping death-gash on his side
Was turned to glory—far and wide
As a bright star it beamed—and he
Walked on in immortality,
Worshipped and wondered at—the brave,
Unenvious to his virtue, gave
Honor and fame, and praise—the old,
Blessed him as he walked by, and told
His name in reverence—beauty's tongue,
Her laugh of love, and her soft song
Ever at his approach were hushed
Unconsciously—and thousands rushed,
Forgetful of themselves, to gaze
And give in looking their heart's praise
To him, of heroes the highest and best,
Whose death-wound was turned to a star on his breast!

With him walked one in converse high,
Of lesser shape, but whose quick eye
Sent inspiration round—the rush
Of bright thoughts in a dazzling blush
Spread o'er his face. Music and song
At his birth informed his tongue

And fired his soul; and with them came
The throb for freedom; but the name
Of his own land had passed away,
And, fettered, amid her waves she lay,
Like a strong man on his hill. The bard
In all her breezes only heard
The sigh of her past fame. No strain
Rose o'er her desolated plain
To mourn her glories gone, or call
The blush of shame for her early fall
Up to her cold destroyer's cheek,
Or on his heart in thunders break.

But the bard caught up his harp, and woke
His Country's Song! And as it broke
Forth in its pride, unmoved he met
From despot tongues their chide or threat—
The lordly frown or luring smile
That strove to silence, or beguile
To silence, a song so high and bold,
So true and fearless—for it told
Her tale in every strain! The wrong
And outrage she had suffered long
Went forth among the nations, 'till
The eyes of men began to fill
With sorrow for her sorrows; and
Even in that cold and careless land
That wrought her woe, one manly sigh
Was heard at last in sympathy

With all her suffering; and for this
Thro' our world of light and bliss
He walked immortal—side by side
With him, the hero, who had died
The highest death a hero can die—
For his native land and her liberty!
And equal reverence to the bard
All creatures gave; and his reward
Was equal glory; a blessed song
Went with them as they walked along;
It was over and round them on their way,
And ever it said thro' the cloudless day—
"Joy to the hero who dared and died
For his country's honor, and fame, and pride;
And joy to the bard whose song brought fame
And pride to his fallen country's name!"

And I saw such scenes of joy and love
In Paradise, that I could rove
Its holy bowers for ever, and be
For ever blessed such joy to see.

I saw an old man sitting alone:
On earth he left a darling one,
And for her coming waited here:
Without, her Paradise was not dear!
In pain and sickness, want and woe,
She had soothed or shared his bosom's throe;

He had no pillow but her breast,
No song but her's to sing him to rest,
No tear but her's to meet his grief,
No smile but her's to beam relief,
No hand but her's to bring him food—
She was his only earthly good!

Her youth and loveliness she forgot:
To shield his years, and share his lot,
The red rose withered on her cheek
Uncared for. She could only seek
Her father's heart by every wile
And every care; and if a smile
Dawned o'er his languid brow, to her
'Twas a more blessed comforter
Than morning's mildest promise when
It smiles on hopeless, sea-wrecked men.

Oft as she watched his fitful sleep,
And wished, and longed, but feared to weep,
The old man in his dreams would press
Her hand. She would feel his caress,
And his fond and murmured blessing hear
With bounding heart and raptured ear,
And every nerve upon the spring
To pay his love with answering cling—
But fear to break his sleep would check
Her natural instinct. Round his neck

Her innocent arms she then would steal,
That he their pressure might not feel,
And to his wan and wasted brow
Her lovely head in reverence bow,
And breathe upon it her meek kiss
Of duteous love and holy bliss.

Alas! in earlier, happier hours,
Hope had entwined some blushing flowers
For her young heart; yes, there was one
She loved, and could have doted on
Thro' weal and woe. Fain would he take
Her heart to his to still its ache;
And she that true heart would have given,
If sorrow for herself had riven
Its tender core. But now she said
She would watch by her father's bed
In his old age, and have no thought
But for his good. And well she wrought
Her blesséd task, until at last
The old man's struggling spirit passed,
And her young cheek was worn and wan
As his from which the life had gone!

She sought him soon. Even as I spoke
With him, beneath his spreading oak,
In solitude, that holy maid
Came on to meet him. She was arrayed

In whitest glory; and as a beam
Of moonlight, or a morning dream
Dreamt by a saint, she came. He saw
And knew her coming. Love and awe,
Rapture and thankfulness, were in his look,
And up he rose; and first he took
Her innocent hand, and fixed his eye
Ecstatic on her, and then nigh
And nigher to his old heart he drew
Its only darling!—And they grew
Together in a long caress
Of wordless love and happiness.

I met some blissful children playing
Thro' the fair fields; and they were straying
Wherever their innocent fancy sent
A wish before them. But I bent
My eye on one, a glorious boy,
Who in this life had been the joy
Of a widowed mother—no second child
She had; and when he laughed or smiled,
Her eyes in happy tears would swim,
And her very heart laugh out with him.

They walked together: it was o'er
A craggy, steep, and sea-washed shore.
The boy ran on to snatch a flower
From the rock's edge. Alas! no power

The wretched mother had to say,
Or shriek her fear. Away, away—
Down, down he fell!

A night and day,
Insensible of life, she lay,
And then her shuddering soul had rest,
And here she came among the blessed
To meet her loved one. As she came,
Instinctively she named his name
In tenderest accents. The boy turned
And knew his mother! His cheek burned
With rosier brightness. From among
His wondering playmates up he sprung,
And round her neck like ivy clung!
And she, in the embrace she gave,
Seemed as for ever she would save
Her child from harm, and make him one
With her own essence. "My son! my son."
She said, "live here upon my heart!
Now we shall never, never part."

A father walked in silent ways
With his two children. Full ripe days
Of manhood he had known; and they,
A boy and girl, died in the May
Of earthly life, and took their way
To him in Paradise. As they walked,
The father to his children talked

Of their good mother, who on earth
Still lived, and of a coming birth
Which would give them, in after years,
Another playmate.

In her tears
On earth the widow dwelt. She knew,
And anguish on that knowledge grew,
That when her husband died, he left
An unborn orphan with her. 'Reft
In him of all that could give life
To life itself, now it was strife
To breathe or walk the earth. The child
She carried, if it ever smiled
In this cold world, would be forlorn
As ever was infant-orphan born ;
For she was hopeless, helpless, low,
And she only wished to die, and go
Where he had gone, whose early heart
Was hers ; whose life in every part,
Since their first union, had been spent
In chastened love and meek content
For her and with her.

Her hour came on,
And she was made mother of a son.
Into her feeble arms she took
Her feebler infant. One fond look,
One mother's kiss, she gave, then shook

Convulsively, and died—and death
Came on her babe in the same breath.

I saw the happy, happy greeting
Of this fond family at their meeting.
With his children hand in hand,
By a lone lake's spreading strand
The father walked. To its far shore
The fair girl looked and pointed. More
She could not say, but turned and ran
To meet her mother. Then began
A scene of Paradise! The boy
Followed his sister, in such joy
As youth and natural love, refined
And made immortal, to his mind
Might bring, impulsive.

With freshened brow,
The mother moved majestic now;
And her young infant to her breast
So fondly, yet so gently, pressed;
Her arms crossed o'er it like a braid
Of white flowers on a lambkin. Led
By equal love, she rushed to meet
Her happy children; and quick feet
Soon find each other. The boy clung
First to his mother's breast, and hung
As a garland there; the girl had ta'en,
To kiss it o'er and o'er again,

The infant to herself; and when
Her brother gave his welcome, then
He took her lovely load, that she
Might also, at full liberty,
Go to her mother's arms. Meanwhile
The father, with a fond, fond smile
Shining o'er all his face, came on
At gentle speed. His glance hath gone
Before him with its welcome. Her's
Hath met it. Oh the thrill that stirs
In two such hearts when two such eyes
Meet once again in Paradise!
She shrieked her joy; and to the child
Yet clinging to her gave a wild
And hasty kiss; and being free
From that embrace, all eagerly
Out of the young boy's arms she took
Her rosy infant, and with a look
I felt and feel, but may not speak,
Ran forward and held forth its cheek
To tempt its father's kiss; and then
She gave it to the boy again.
And the fond wife and husband pressed
Each other to each other's breast
In such chaste rapture as is known
In bowers of blessedness alone!

On his hill old Comhal dwelt.
I saw him, and in awe I knelt.

He raised me with his aged hand,
And asked of his own lovely land,
And spoke of Finn ; and when I told
The fields of fight of that hero bold,
He wept in joy for the fame he won,
And often blessed his only son.

And there he dwelt upon his hill,
And thought of his deeds of danger still,
Or, mounted on his cloudy steed,
Hunted the stag in pleasant speed.
Sometimes my gentle love and I
Such wild unearthly sport would try ;
And it was ecstacy to chase,
That brown stag in his mimic race !
My horse was of the darkened air,
My dogs were made of the breezes there,
And the bounding stag was born of light
Made visible like the rainbow bright !

And together we sat in her house of flowers,
And laughed at the careering hours.
Silence was round us, except the sigh
Of the love-sick breezes floating by,
Or the small sweet song of the beautiful birds
That, like us, lived on loving. Words
We wanted not—our hearts and eyes
Shone through each other—thoughts and sighs

Were mutual—and for our nuptial bed
The tenderest flowers their softness shed,
And burned in blushes ripe and red,
Such lovely limbs as her's to press
In all their modest nakedness.

Our's was not earthly love. To sit
A little parted and opposite,
And gently hold each other's hand,
While the vassal-breeze our sighings fanned
Backward and forward—and to look
Long in each other's eyes, that took
Our thinkings to the heart, and then
Gave them out in light again ;
Thus to be, without motion or stir,
Each the other's idolater,
Alone, and long, and wordless, till
Our eyes began with tears to fill,
Our frames with faintness, and our sighs
With choaked and broken ecstacies ;
And we at last sunk gently—folded
In holy fondness—thus to be,
And thus to feel!—No creature moulded
In feelings of mere mortality
May ever think or ever bring
Such bliss to his imagining.

Or we wandered among shining streams,
That, like the bard's delicious dreams,

Ever flow thro' beds of flowers,
And golden vales, and blushing bowers.
And all in playfulness we gaze
With sportive and well feigned amaze
On the water—and start and blush
To see ourselves there ; and we rush
And plunge together, as if to save
Each other from that innocent wave ;
Then with it go and glide along
In echoing laughter, mirth, and song,

Or alone we sat by the foamy fountain,
In the solitude of the silent mountain,
And I plucked a water-flower from its flow,
And wreathed it with leaves on the mountain that grow.
And when on her head it was a crown,
At her feet I knelt me down,
And called her the lady and the queen
Of that wild and desolate scene.

Or often—for our pure nature gave
That triumph over the gloomy grave—
Often our spirits winged away,
Disembodied through the day,
And into aught they would possess,
Breathed themselves in gentleness ;
And so became the breeze or dew,
Or shrub or flower of any hue.

Then sometimes my love was the tall young tree
That grows on the mountain lonelily,
And I was the wooing eglantine,
Around her slender shape to twine,
And climb till I kissed the topmost bough
That blossomed on her fragrant brow.
Or she was the softly opening flower,
Among a thousand in her bower,
And I was the bee that passed all by,
Till I saw my own flower blushing nigh,
And then in her bleeding bosom I lay,
And sipped its sweets, and flew away.

Or still she was that rose, and I
Came down as a soft wind from the sky,
And sadly I sighed thro' fields and bowers,
Till I found at last my flower of flowers,
And then beneath her folds I crept,
And there in perfumed sweetness slept.
Or a crystal drop was on her leaf,
And I playfully called it the tear of grief,
And then I was the loving light
To kiss away its essence bright!

Or she kept her own immortal form,
And I came as the breezes wild and warm
Of which she breathed. I was a sigh
Within her heart, alternately

Coming and going. Or as she lay
Reclining, I stole in amorous play,
And fluttered all over her gentle frame,
As if to fan its virgin flame!

FOURTH DUAN.

And yet beneath that happy sky
Was heard one ever-during sigh;
One heart of sadness there was known,
One voice of sorrow wept alone,
And o'er that Paradise it would break,
Like a single tear on a sunny cheek.

And it named a name in all its weeping
The sighing heart was sick with keeping;
It named a name whose very sound,
On such a lip, in such holy ground,
Proved all enough that name to sever
From it and Paradise for ever.
Minona! The sad voice was thine,
And the oft-whispered name was mine.

Silent I sat in my Spirit's bower;
It was her gentle slumbering hour;
Her head was cradled on my breast,
And she had sighed herself to rest:

And all around, the clustering trees,
Had closed on love's long mysteries,
Making a modest twilight, such
As love itself deemed not too much.
I heard amongst the bushes round
A sobbing sigh, a moaning sound—
And then I saw blue weeping eyes
Gaze on me in my mute surprise—
And they streamed thro' the dark bower's leafy shroud
Like azure thro' a thunder cloud.

A feeble recollection came
Of looks like these and eyes the same—
And more intense my gazings grew;
But the young eyes faded from my view,
And I only heard a whispering song
Its mournful music thus prolong.

My life on earth was a long, long sigh
Of hopes and fears, of hopes and fears;
My life on earth was a long, long shower
Of silent tears, of silent tears;
And the sudden smile that sometimes came
O'er all my woe, o'er all my woe,
Was the tempest-flash that breaks upon
The void below, the void below

I could not live on earth to love,
And love in vain, and love in vain,
And I died to seek some other land,
To soothe my pain, to soothe my pain.
The flowers were bright, the sky was fair,
Morn and even, morn and even,
But Ossian was on earth behind,
And it was not heaven, it was not heaven.

I often wept and wished him dead,
And here with me, and here with me;
He might forget his greatness then,
And kinder be, and kinder be.
He came at last, but not alone,
My wish to bless, my wish to bless;
Another heart has made for him
His happiness, his happiness.

I wish I was on earth again,
In rougher skies, in rougher skies;
Their tears and darkness would be like
My agonies, my agonies.
Oh! it is comfortless to live
In lonely sighs, in lonely sighs—
The only weeping thing that walks
Thro' Paradise, thro' Paradise.

The sighing song has ceased around,
So gentle in its whispering sound,
On her soft ear who yet is sleeping,
It came unheard; but sobs and weeping
Yet linger round me, and I listened
Till the trembling tear of pity glistened——

"Who art thou, mourner all alone?
And how was Ossian loved or known?"

"When happier eyes have holy rest,
And every heart but mine is blessed,
Oh meet me in my silent vale,
And listen to my weeping tale.
Ossian, I hope not for thy kiss,—
But, give thy tear—it would be bliss
I never had to see thee weep,
And hear thee wish my woes asleep."

I met her in her silent vale,
And listened to her weeping tale.
I listened—we were there alone—
In sorrow; and I looked upon
A face and form whose fresh, fair youth,
So full of tenderness and truth,
Was wet with tears for love of me,
And if I smiled, not doom to be
For ever fading. And she spoke
In sighings wild, that, fluttering, broke

From the heart's prison, where they had slept
A long, sad slumber—and she wept
Warm, streaming tears, and knew not whether
In love or grief, or both together,
Their gushings wandered. Needs there more
To tell a tale oft told before?
I braved the sea, and was tempest-tossed;
I looked, and listened, and was lost!

Beauty!—The bard's eternal theme—
His long, long sigh, his ceaseless dream—
His hope, his virtue, and his sin—
The breath that brings him life within!—
To bask an hour, bright beam! in thee,
How have I darkened my destiny,
When it was shining clear and calm,
And dared to be the thing I am!
With thee, my life wove all its flowers;
For thee, my eyes shed all their showers;
For thee, I left my field of fame,
And risked a dear and deathless name;
For thee, I gave up my world to brave
The rushing wind and roaring wave;
In my Paradise I forgot
Its flowers for thee, and loved them not;
For thee, my sin was unforgiven,
And I left my earth, and lost my heaven!

What was her story? Hear it flow
In her own wild words of woe.

"Ossian, thou wert my soul's first sigh,
My virgin heart's idolatry!
I saw thee in thy father's hall,
The fairest there, the first of all—
The softest voice of sounding song,
The bravest in the battle throng,
The rosiest cheek, the richest smile
That lighted up our own green isle.
I saw thee, but alone I stood
In my young heart's widowhood;
I was too lowly ever to be
A beam of loveliness to thee;
Yet, like the flower, I looked upon
My own loved light where'er it shone,
Till it had scorched my leaves at last,
And left them withering in the blast!

"It was my spring—my budding hour—
And in thy smile my heart was born,
And for thy sake it got the power
Of loving in that maiden morn.
But when it loved too long and lone,
And had no hope of love from thee,
Still, like the flower, when the light is gone,
It shut its leaves, and would not be.

No colder smile, no moonshine glow,
Might ever waken it from its woe!

"I was the most forsaken one
That walked and wept beneath the sun!
The virgin stream, the first fond gush
My young heart gave ; it could not rush
Forth and rejoice, but backward crept,
And in the poor heart's silence slept—
Sickening in its own repose,
Like dull deep water that never flows.
My youth was joyless—and my fate,
I thought it dark and desolate,
As if thy own harp, all forsaken,
Lay silent and untouched by thee,
For no other hand could waken
Its neglected harmony!

"One wish I had. It was to take
My death from him I loved so well.
My heart was breaking, and would break,
Ere words or sighs its tale might tell ;
But rather than live till it grew dark
In its own helplessness, I sought
His shining sword, to strike one spark
Of feeling thro' it. I recked not
If pain or pleasure ; and in the flame
Which from that spark all quickly came,

I thought it would be bliss to burn,
And into dull cold ashes turn!

"I thought from him who bade me cease
To love, such recompense were due—
I thought that he who killed my peace
Should kill my mind and memory too!

"I had my wish! The battle came—
The blazing sun flung forth its flame—
The Fenii went to quell the pride
Of Morni's host. That evening tide
I grasped a spear—thy foeman's crest
My flushed and throbbing forehead pressed,
And I felt no fear! A warrior boy,
So young thou scarcely couldst destroy,
Came out to brave thee from the crowd;
Like a faint flash from a tempest-cloud,
Thy sword descended on my breast,
And I thought I had my pleasant rest.

"But here on this bright shore I woke,
To weep for thee and love thee still;
Thy sword my young life's vision broke,
My memory it could not kill!
I sate alone by the bubbling stream,
And sang a song of fondness to it—
But it gushed on; and in my dream,
Often I would wildly woo it;

And ever as it stole away,
I wept and sighed, 'False Ossian stay!'
It took my tear, it heard me sigh,
And smiled in scorn, and passed me by.

"Go, Ossian, go. Thy sleeping flower
Hath wakened in her happy bower.
My tale is told. But art thou here,
Breathing the same soft air with me;
And must I weep my widowed tear,
And never, never blissful be?

"Go, Ossian, go. I wish for thee
A life of love eternally,
Tho' thou hast been to me the blast
That chilled my dream of one world's bliss,
And from that triumph now hath passed
To wither up my hopes in this.
Oh kill me, Ossian, once again,
And my sleep may be eternal then!"

Her soft voice sunk in broken sighs,
Half rapture and half agonies;
Her soft blue eyes were shut in tears,
And they bathed her lips, and the red and white
Of her rich cheek—and thus appears,
Ere the sun comes to lend them light,

A cluster of three fairest flowers,
  Lily, violet, and rose,
Sorrowing in the dewy showers
  The night has wept on their repose.
And one white arm she tossed on high,
And it fell against a green bank nigh,
Resting there unconsciously—
And over it her head was drooping
So hopelessly! And she was stooping,
Half-turned from my enraptured look
That now in all its glancings took
Abundant love. Oh who could pause
For the cold, pitiful applause
Of prudence then! Nay, had I stood
  On the bare edge of a rock,
And saw her thus beneath a flood
  The wildest of the wild, its shock
I could despise, and brave, and mock—
Plunging, tho' to my early grave,
To clasp and kiss her under its wave!
And forward I have bent and sighed
A sigh that her's have multiplied—
And now my wooing arms are stealing
Round her—and now I am unveiling
Her young cheek from the wild bright hair
That strove to hide its blushings fair,
Like a golden sunburst streaming proud
O'er summer evening's crimson cloud—

And gentle strife I have to turn
Her lips to mine that madly burn—
And half an effort she would make
My fond embraces not to take.
At last she paused, and in my eyes
Looked up in questioning surprise;
And chilling doubts, and hopes and fears,
And wishings wild, and smiles and tears,
On her cheek, and in her eye,
Mingled and fought for mastery.
And love can read the look it loves
So true, the reading never proves
Doubtful or false; and when she dwelt
Long, long on mine, and knew and felt
My heart was her's, that happy maid
One step drew back, while laughter played
Convulsive on her lip, then flung
Herself around me, warm and young,
And, blushing bright, and wildly weeping,
Crept close into my bosom's keeping.

"By the smooth lake's silver wave
A bower of loveliness I have—
Over the mountain, away and far,
Where nothing but flowers and breezes are.
I wove it in that pathless wild,
To weep alone, when others smiled—
And its friendly shade my secret kept,
And no laugh was round me when I wept—

And not a leaf its wildness wears
But has been nurtured in my tears.

"Oh! we will go together there,
And give the drooping flowers one smile,
And they will look more fresh and fair,
Than any in this blesséd isle!
No sound or voice will ever come
On our silence to intrude,
And thou shalt have my flowery home
And faithful heart in solitude!"

The kiss was given!—and a wind
Came rushing o'er the rocks behind—
Too rude to be the breeze that fanned
The roses of that happy land;
And as it hurried by, the air
Darkened, and made a shadow there,
Which feebly and confusedly took
My Spirit's form; her cloudy look
Glanced anger on me, and she passed
Careering on the wrathful blast.
Then I was in a place all light
And silence. Shapes more chastely white
Than I had seen stood in a throng
Entranced, as list'ning to some song
Of holy power, which they alone
Might hear and worship. And there was one,

Throned in the midst—a radiant form
Of unveiled glory, but not warm
And scorching like the sun's; his light,
Tho' it dazzled more, was silvery bright
And awful; and he was the king
Of Paradise—and every thing
That lives or breathes.

A creature knelt
Weeping beneath his smile, which dwelt
Pleasantly on her. Then I felt
The fear of crime; for well I knew
Her to whose love I was untrue.
She motioned at me; and that high
And awful being on my eye
Flashed frowning terrors—a frown; but aught
Of earthly anger it had not;
There was no shade in it, nor less
Of glory; rather it did compress
Into one self-assuming glance
The rays of his whole countenance;
And it was a frown of gathered light,
More dreadful than the glooms of night.

Then all things faded. From my soul
Its pure immortal Spirit stole,
And human terrors filled my brain,
And, curdling, ran thro' every vein;

And either the land receded fast,
And shook me from its edge at last,
Or some strong invisible arm
Bound me in its chilly charm,
And, unresisting, I was hurled
Into a cold and darkened world.

I stood alone in thickened gloom.
I thought it might be one spreading tomb
For the whole earth, and that around
All things their sepulchre had found
Under the broad vault of the sky,
Which closed on them too suddenly
While yet they lived. Feeble and far
A blood-red, half-distinguished star
Lent sullen light. One lurid streak
Fell from it on the raven cheek
Of utter darkness ; and around,
Terrific forms in silence frowned,
Shapeless and nameless ; and to mine eye,
Sometimes they rolled off cloudily,
Wedding themselves with gloom, or grew
Gigantic on my troubled view,
And seemed to gather round me. Few
And fearful were the thoughts that came
Upon me in that hour. The same
Might be his thinkings who hath stood,
Dizzy amid the dashing flood,

On a poor plank, hopeless to save
One breathing moment from that wave;
Or it was as if within the womb,
While yet in uncreated gloom,
The embryo-soul could faintly feel
A little while its promised zeal,
Then, darkening in its own essay,
Melt once again to night away.

And I looked toward that far, far light,
And suddenly upon my sight
It swelled and parted; and as a spark
Shook from it, but now quenched and dark,
I saw a dim and dusky form,
Like any our fancy's dream may warm
With life, come forward; and I thought,
Far off, with clouds and gloom it fought,
And traversed hills and deserts, set
Even in remotest distance yet.
But quick and dark it came, and swelled
To giant size; and I beheld
Its cloudy face. On me it bent
A look of dark and dread intent.
I strove to flee it; but my blood
Curdled, and there, unnerved, I stood,
Helpless and hopeless. Nearer still
The giant came. Intent to kill,
His cloudy arm he raised on high,
And again I feebly strove to fly,

And backward fell. Oh! Then I stepped
On a loose rock, that trembling kept
Unfaithful watch o'er a gulf below
Of depth unfathomed. I slide! I go!
But in my fall I madly grasp
And cling to something!—and I gasp,
Suspended there, in sick'ning dread—
Ruin below, and overhead
Darkness—and that terrific form
My heart's blood shrinks from.

Breathings warm
Are near me. Mighty God! I see
That maid so well beloved of me,
In fainting weakness, clinging there,
Like a white mist, hung in morning air,
O'er the hill's brow. Her only stay
Is a loose ledge of rock and clay,
That cannot give her rest. It shakes!—
It yields!—it crumbles!—ha! it breaks!
Oh, horror! horror!—And she falls
Thro' depths of darkness!—and she calls
On Ossian still! Her frenzied shriek
Still upward thro' that gloom will break
On my pierced ear. Again, again
It thrills my heart and stabs my brain,
And I am sick with fear and pain.
I fail!—I faint!—I sink!—I fall!
Down, down thro' darkness, rocks and all!

This was my punishment. I woke,
I know not how, as the morning broke,
And again sat under the wild-wood tree,
An earthly sun once more to see—
And thro' the leaves his beamings glanced,
And on the green turf gayly danced
In chequered radiance, quick and fair,
Like laughing eyes thro' parted hair.

NOTES TO THE CELT'S PARADISE.

NOTES TO THE FIRST DUAN.

Page 8, line 4.

"Lead me to Slieve Gullian's breast."

Slieve Gullian is a mountain in the County of Armagh, often mentioned in our old Irish poems as the scene of many gallant and chivalrous exploits of Finn Mac Comhal, his sons Ossian and Firgus, and his grandson Osgur. Its scenery, and the traditions connected with it, render this celebrated mountain an object of classic interest to all lovers of national legend and antiquity. The following description of it (for which the author is indebted to Miss Brooks, and that lady to a correspondent) may not be amiss in this place:

"I am a tenant to a lady for Slieve Gullian, and often visit it during the summer season to see my cattle. In July last (1788) I went over the extent of this mountain. From bottom to top it is reckoned two miles; on the summit there is a large heap of stones, which is called Cailbach Birnn's House, in which, it is said, Finn Mac Comhal lies buried; and at a hundred paces distant, in nearly the same line, there is a circular lake, the diameter of which is about one hundred feet, and is about twenty deep; on one side of this lake another heap of stones is piled; and round it, at all seasons, is a beaten path leading to the old lady's or witch's house. Lately some peasants, expecting to find the old woman (who, however, has at no time thought proper to

appear), threw down her house, and came to a large cave, about twenty feet long, ten broad, and five deep, covered with flags, in which either the dame or money was expected, but only a few human bones were found. From the summit of this mountain, if the day happens to be fine, you command an extensive view of Lough Neagh, and all the circumjacent country."

The lake here described is rendered famous on account of an old poetical romance which details an interview on its margin between the then resident enchantress of the place and the redoubtable Finn Mac Comhal, which terminated all but fatally for (notwithstanding Messrs. Blair and Macpherson) that flower of Irish chivalry. The enchantress was encountered by Finn in the shape of a beautiful woman, bewailing the loss of her favorite ring, which, as she avowed, had just dropped into the lake. Half urged by the lady's solicitude, half by his own gallantry, the hero dived after the ring, and owing to the supernatural influence of the enchanted waters, became immediately transformed from a hale, blooming chevalier into a wrinkled, tottering old man. Finn's myrmidons, however, coming soon after in pursuit of their chief, and justly suspecting that the enchantress of Slieve Gullian had something to do with his sudden disappearance, obliged her by threat and main force to restore him to his original shape. The cave which has been described by Miss Brooks' correspondent, was at that time the known residence of the enchantress, and out of it she is made to issue, in the romance alluded to, at the command of Finn's companions in arms.

Page 8, line 10.

"*Than those thy altar bells are ringing.*"

Large bells to toll for church service are not here meant, but the little tinkling bells, at all times, as well as now, made use of in Roman Catholic churches during the celebration of the Mass. They are alluded to by Ossian in many old poems with much contempt.

"Small bells (such, we mean, as were appended to the tunic of the Jewish High Priest, and afterwards employed by the Greeks and Romans for various religious purposes, but particularly to frighten ghosts and demons from their temples) were undoubtedly introduced with Christianity into this kingdom (Ireland). Their use among the Christian clergy is supposed to be coeval with their religion; and the missionaries who were sent to convert the Pagan Irish would not omit bringing with them an appendage of their profession, which is still thought so necessary."—*Walker's Hist. Mem. of the Irish Bards*, p. 93.

Page 8, line 11.

"*And thy white-robed Culdees singing.*"

Culdus, the ancient Irish name for priest; originally, perhaps, synonymous with Druid.

Page 12, lines 16 and 17.

"*And for this, must prayers be read,*
And beads be told, and matins said?"

It is hoped that little apology will be necessary for the wayward reasoning of the old bard in this and similar passages. Ossian, as the legend goes, was found by St. Patrick in a state of utter Paganism. He is represented in many old rhymes, as well as in the present instance, but half convinced of, half converted to, Christianity; and this may extenuate the crime of his indulging, now and then, in a preference for the convenient heaven of his own wild mythology. But in Miss Brooks' translation of "Reliques of Irish Poetry," he is made to speak more positive impiety than one would be induced to imitate or hazard for him at present—thus,

"Where was thy God in that sad day,
When o'er Sioni's wave,
Two heroes ploughed the watery way
Their beauteous prize to save?

"Or on that day when Jailk's proud might
Invaded Erin's coast—
Where was thy Godhead in that fight,
And where thy empty boast?"

Perhaps no printed poem or legend extant affords hope of the emancipation of the old poet from these dangerous prejudices. A tradition, however, which I recollect to have heard in early childhood, would appear to give him the credit and advantage of a full and perfect conversion. According to it, Ossian, at some period or other, was absolutely baptized by St. Patrick. During the ceremony, the saint, to prove his penitent's humility and self-command, transfixed his foot to the ground by striking the spike of his crosier through it. The tradition adds—This rather severe trial of his Christian docility was not met even by an expostulation on the part of the reformed Free-thinker.

It may be proper to remark that the same circumstance is told as an historical fact by Keating, O'Halloran, and others, of St. Patrick, and the first Irish king who embraced Christianity.

Page 14, lines 17 and 18.

"*Give me the old Clarseech I hung*
On my loved tree."

Clarseech, the old Irish name for harp. Perhaps this title is not meant to designate the national harp, as used by the bards in princely halls, or on important occasions. It would rather seem to apply to a modification of the latter, corresponding, in point of lightness and partiality, to the Grecian lyre. The small one exhibited in the museum of Trinity College is that used by Brian Borseme, and certainly gives no adequate idea of a musical instrument so celebrated as the Irish harp has been for the compass and power of its melody; and probably a distinction either has been or could be made between the Clarseech, with which the interesting relic just mentioned would

appear to class, and a larger and more important instrument, all authentic models of which are, at this remote day, extinct.

Page 15, line 1.

"All day we chased the dark-brown deer."

These hunting-matches continued several days, and in some seasons several months. At night they encamped in woods, and reposed in booths covered with the skins of animals they hunted down.

The chase was to them (the ancient Irish) "a sort of military school, which rendered toil easy, and annexed a pleasure to the rudest fatigue. It gave them great *muscular* strength, and great agility and firmness against the severity of the most rigorous seasons. It besides taught them vigilance, skill in archery, and great patience under long abstinence from food. They came out of the forest expert *soldiers;* and no nation could excel them in *rapid marches*, *quick retreats*, and sudden sallies."—*O'Connor's Dissertations*, p. 77, 101.

This quotation is made, principally, to support the admission of a liberty into which the author makes little doubt he has fallen—namely, that of giving to Ossian the accompaniment of a horse on the particular occasion to which he here alludes. It is evident that O'Connor means to describe a chase pursued on foot, as the words marked in italics in the quotation will sufficiently show; and he must further be understood to speak of the very time in which Ossian is, according to the poem, supposed to have lived. But the impropriety of making Ossian a cavalier will more strongly appear when we come to observe on the national military body of which our Irish authorities would make him a distinguished member.

Page 15, line 3.

"We broke the dew on Allen's breast."

A hill in the County of Kildare, whose identity cannot now be ascertained, was at the real or imaginary era to which we could refer,

called "the Hill of Allen," from the palace of Allen built on its top, much celebrated as the seat of Finn Mac Comhal. Of this, more in another place.

Page 18, line 9.

"*And in my helmet water clear.*"

It would have been taking rather a hazardous liberty to have given Ossian any body-armor except the helmet. In describing Fitzstephen's first disastrous attack on the town of Wexford in 1169, Gerald Barry, Champion, Stanihurst, Zeanmer, and later writers, affirm that among other appalling accompaniments, the shining armor of the English knights was a terrifying spectacle to the natives. Taking leave to form our own opinion as to the passions excited on the occasion, we must infer from these authorities that the native Irish did not at that time wear armor. Our own writers almost concur in this opinion.

"It should seem that body-armor of any kind was unknown to the Irish previous to the tenth century, as we find King Murkertach, in that century, obtaining the ascititious name of *Muirkentach na goechall croceann* for so obvious an invention as that of the leathern jacket. Yet coats of mail are mentioned in the Brehon Laws, and the word *mail* is supposed to be derived from *mala* in Irish. Though the poets of the Middle Ages describe the heroes of Ossian as shining in polished steel, no relic of that kind of armor has escaped the wreck of time in Ireland; nor has there even a specimen of the brass armor, in which, it is said, the Danes so often met the Irish, fallen under my observation. Smith, indeed, tells us that corselets of pure gold were discovered on the lands of Clonties, in the County of Kerry; but these might have been left there by the Spaniards, who had a fortification called *Fort del Ore* adjoining those lands.

"That the bodies of Irishmen should have been totally defenceless with respect to armor during their several bloody contests with the Danes, I am neither prepared to admit nor deny; but I confess myself

inclined to think that their inflexible attachment to their civil dress would not yield to the fashion of the martial garb of their enemies, though it gave those people an evident advantage over them in the field of battle. It is, however, certain that the English did not find them cased in armor."—*Walker's Hist. Essay on the Dress and Armor of the Irish*, p. 106.

But that helmets, at least, were worn in Ireland previous to the tenth century, is certain from some Irish coins found (according to Simon's Essay on Irish Coins and Trans. of the R. S. Acad.) in the Queen's County, in the year 1786.

Page 20, line 15.

"*A Sidhee spirit.*"

"Saint Patrick happened to be chanting his matins with three of his bishops, and a great number of his clergy, very early on a morning, at a fountain called Clabach, to the east of Cruachan, when the two princesses, daughters of Laogar, the then King of Ireland, at sunrise, came forth to wash their faces and view themselves in that fountain, as in a mirror.

"When the princesses saw these venerable gentlemen, clothed in white surplices, and holding hooks in their hands, astonished at their unusual dress and attitudes, they looked upon them to be the people Sidhee. The Irish call these Sidhee aerial spirits or phantoms, because they are seen to come out of pleasant hills, where the common people imagine they reside; which fictitious habitations are called by us Sidhee or Siodha.

"From whence we may infer that the divinities of the Irish were local ones—that is, residing in mountains, plains, and such places."—*O'Flaherty's Ogygia.*

It will be seen that one liberty has been taken with these continent divinities. O'Flaherty would appear to limit their residence to the

hills and plains of this earth: in the foregoing poem they are assumed to have lived and breathed in a world and atmosphere peculiar to themselves.

NOTES TO THE SECOND DUAN.

Page 22, line 17.

"——*Allen's stately hall*——"

The palace of Almhain, Almhuin, Alwin, or Allen, alluded to in a former note as built on the top of the Hill of Allen, in the County of Kildare, and much celebrated as the principal residence of Finn Mac Comhal. According to Keating (p. 271), Moona, or Muirne (the beloved maid of the fascinating wiles), was the mother of Finn, and he possessed this palace in her right.

In the rhapsody of Ossian, which gives an account of the seven redoubtable battalions of the Finii, there is a passage descriptive of the palace of Allen, its economy, feasts, &c., in English, as follows:

"I have seen when I banqueted in the halls of Finn, at every banquet a thousand cups, bound with wreaths of wrought gold.

"There were twelve palaces, filled with the troops of the son of the daughter of Tagus, at Almhain, of the noble Finii.

"Twelve constant fires flamed in each princely house: and each fire was surrounded by an hundred of the mighty Finii."

This description reminds us of the good old times in "Branksome Hall."

Page 31, line 1 and 2.

"*The stars were up, and, weak and small,*
They twinkled round a darken'd ball."

In partial excuse for Ossian's unscientific description of this appearance of the earth among the other heavenly bodies, it may be

considered that the flood of ages and revolutions had swept away all trace of the astronomical acquirement which his Phœnician and Egyptian ancestors, Heber and Heremon, might be supposed to have transplanted into Ireland at (according to our devoted lovers of extreme antiquity) their first descent on the country, A. M. 2240.

NOTES TO THE THIRD DUAN.

Page 34, line 10.

"*Away, and leave me to my wrath.*"

In many of the old Irish poems before alluded to, misunderstandings and bickerings often occur between Ossian and St. Patrick, of which this passage would presume to be no more then a very humble imitation. One or two specimens from Miss Brooks' devoted translation will give a pretty fair idea of the whole.

"PATRICK.

"Drop we our speech on either side,
Thou bald and senseless fool!
In torments all thy race abide,
While God in heaven shall rule."

* * * * * * *

"OSSIAN.

"Now, Patrick of the scanty store
And meagre-making face!
Say, didst thou ever meet before
This memorable chase?"

Page 34, line 17.

"Oh, Osgur! my heart's darling son."

Scotch and Irish bards and antiquarians agree tolerably well in their pedigree of Ossian's family: the former only differing from the latter by going a little further back. Thus: Tagus had a daughter who was married and had Comhal, who was married (to Moona) and had Finn, who was married and had Ossian and Fergus; Ossian had Osgur: Fergus appears to have died unmarried. Fergus is much famed for gentleness of character in all our old rhymes, and esteemed a poet scarcely inferior to Ossian. He was, in fact, the official bard of his father, Finn Mac Comhal, and supplied the place of the "spirit-stirring" trumpet, by rushing among his ranks during the deathful conflict, and exciting the courage and energies of the heroes by the delivering of extemporaneous odes. Among the originals given by Miss Brooks of her "Reliques," there are some pieces attributed to Fergus, which, if we may be allowed to judge of them through the medium of that lady's translation, appear to possess many fine and daring passages.

Again: we meet in our national poems almost all the names, independent of Ossian's family, to which Mr. Macpherson has familiarized the literary world. We find Cuchullin, "mighty chief," Cairbre, Morni and his son Gall or Gaul: the latter regarded as a warrior of formidable powers, not yielding even to Finn in the terrors of his arm.

Page 34, line 22.

"The last of all the Fenian race."

"The Irish in general were called Fenians or Phenians, from their great ancestor Phinius-Tarsa, or perhaps in allusion to their Phœnician descent. But the Leinster legions proudly arrogated that name entirely to themselves, and called their celebrated body exclusively *Fenii*, or *Fiana Eireann.*"—*Miss Brooks*, p. 158.

Of this body Finn Mac Comhal was commander-in-chief; and hence his appellation of King of the Fenii.

"The constant number of this standing army in times of peace, and when there was no disturbances at home, nor any want of their assistance to their allies abroad, were nine thousand men, divided equally into three battalions. But in case of any apprehension of a conspiracy, or a rebellion against the monarch, or if there was any necessity of transporting a body of troops to Scotland, in order to defend their allies, the Dalriades, it was in the power of Finn to increase his forces to seven battalions of three thousand each. Every battalion was commanded by a colonel; every hundred men by a captain; an officer in the nature of a lieutenant was set over every fifty; and a serjeant, resembling the Decurio of the Romans, was at the head of every five-and-twenty. When they were drawn out for action, every hundred men were distributed into ten files, with ten (of course) in each; and the leader of the file gave the word to the other nine. As it was thought a great honor to belong to this invincible body of troops, their general was very strict in insisting on the qualifications necessary for admission into it.

"The parents (or near relations) of every candidate for the militia were to give security that they would not attempt to revenge his death, but leave it to his fellow-soldiers to do him justice. He must have a poetical genius, and be well acquainted with the twelve books of poetry. He was to stand at the distance of nine ridges of land, with only a stick and a target, and nine soldiers were to throw their javelins at him at once, from which he was to defend himself unhurt, or be rejected. He was to run through a wood with his hair plaited, pursued by a company of the militia, the breadth of a tree only being allowed between them at setting out, without being overtaken, or his hair falling loose about him. He was to leap over a tree as high as his forehead, and easily stoop under another that was as low as his knee. These qualifications being proved, he was then to take an oath of allegiance to the king, and of fidelity to Finn, his commander-in-chief.

"The reader will judge of the propriety of most of these qualifications; but this was not everything that was required. Every soldier, before he was enrolled, was obliged to subscribe to the following articles: That if ever he was disposed to marry, he would not conform to the mercenary custom of requiring a portion with his wife; but, without regard to her fortune, he would choose a woman for her virtue and courteous manners. That he would not offer violence to any woman. That he would be charitable to the poor, as far as his abilities would permit. And that he would not turn his back nor refuse to fight with ten men of any other nation.

"In the times of peace they were required to defend the inhabitants against the attempts of thieves or robbers; to quell riots or insurrections; to levy fines, and secure estates that were confiscated to the crown; in short, to suppress all seditious and traitorous practices in the beginning, and to appear under arms when any breach of faith required it. They had no subsistence-money from the monarchs, but during the winter half year, when they were billetted on the country, and dispersed in different quarters. During the other half of the year they were encamped about the fields, and obliged to fish and hunt for their support. This was not only a great ease to the monarch and his subjects, but it inured the troops to fatigue, preserved them in health and vigor, and accustomed them to lie abroad in the field; and in a country which abounded so much with venison, fish, and fowl, as Ireland did, it was no other hardship than what was proper to the life of soldiers, to be obliged to draw their subsistence in the summer season from those articles.

"They made but one meal in the four-and-twenty hours, which was always in the evening; and besides the common method of roasting their meat before the fire, they had another very remarkable. The places which they chose to encamp in were always in the neighborhood of water, when great fires were made in order to heat some large stones for soddening their meat. Here large pits were dug, into which they threw a layer of stones when they were hot, and then a layer of flesh, till the pit was full, or their quantity of meat was finished.

"If their exercise led them, as it often did, to too great a distance to return to their camp, as soon as dinner was ended, they erected little temporary tents or booths, in which their beds were laid out and constructed with great exactness. Next the ground were placed the small branches of trees, upon which was strewed a large quantity of moss, and over all were laid bundles of rushes, which made a very commodious lodging, and which, in the old manuscripts, are called 'the three beds of the Irish Militia.' The marks of their fires continue deep in the earth, in many parts of the island, to this day; and when the husbandman turns up the black burnt clay with his plough, he immediately knows the occasion of it; and even now that soil is called by the name of 'Fullacht Finn.' The Militia were as much under discipline when encamped thus in the summer as when they were at quarters, and they were at stated times obliged to perform their military exercise. Besides these regulations for the army, the celebrated Finn, who was as great a philosopher as a general, drew up several axioms of jurisprudence, which were incorporated into the celestial judgments of the state."—*Dr. Warner's History of Ireland*, p. 289.

From Miss Brooks' translation of parts of the "Rhapsody of Ossian," before alluded to, it may not be uninteresting to subjoin here a description of the character of the Irish Fingall.

"Finn of the large and liberal soul of bounty: exceeding all his countrymen in the prowess and accomplishments of a warrior. King of mild majesty and numerous bards.

"The ever-open house of kindness was his heart: the seat of undaunted courage; great was the chief of the mighty Finii!—Finn of the perfect soul, the consummate wisdom; whose knowledge penetrated events, and pierced through the veil of futurity. Finn of the splendid and ever-during glories.

"Bright were his blue rolling eyes, and his hair like flowing gold! Lovely were the charms of his unaltered beauty, and his cheeks like the glowing rose.

"Each female heart overflowed with affection for the hero whose bosom was like the whiteness of the chalky cliff; for the mild son of Morni: Finn, the king of the glittering blades of war."

Page 31, lines 24 and 25.

. . . . "*Were there one*
Of all my heroes that are gone."

Invincible as the prowess of the Finii was deemed, they met with a signal defeat at the battle of Gabhra, fought between them and Cairbre, the monarch of Ireland. Finn and his grandson Osgur, with their most famous chiefs, fell on the field: and Ossian* seems to have been the only member of his family left to mourn over their extinction, which he often does, or is made to do, in "old Irish compositions" attributed to him.

The annals of Innispaelm, and other ancient records and poems, inform us that the battle of Gabhra was fought in the year of our Lord 296.† The cause of this battle (as well as I can collect from various accounts) was pretty nearly as follows.

"The celebrated body of the Finii had grown to a formidable degree of power. Conscious of the defence they afforded their country, and the glory they reflected on it, they became overbearing and insolent, esteeming too highly of their merits, and too meanly of their rewards: and this the more as they perceived the monarch disposed to slight their services and envy their fame.

"It would be tedious here to relate the various causes assigned by different writers for the discontents which occasioned this battle. Historians, in general, lay the blame upon the Finii: and the poets, taking part with their favorite heroes, cast the whole odium upon

* According to the book of Hoath.

† The author is aware of the gross anachronism committed by making St. Patrick, who came to Ireland toward the end of the fourth century, a cotemporary with Ossian, who fought in the battle of Gabhra in 296.

Cairbre, the monarch of Ireland. The fault most likely was mutual, and both parties suffered for it. Cairbre himself was killed in the action, and a dreadful slaughter ensued among his troops: but those of the Finii were almost totally destroyed, for, relying upon that valor which they fondly deemed invincible, they rushed into the field against odds that madmen alone would have encountered."—*Miss Brooks*, pp. 146–7.

Page 54, lines 17 and 18.

"*And called her the lady and the queen*
Of that wild and desolate scene."

When the above lines were written, the author had never seen Mr. Barry Cornwall's beautiful poem, "The Sicilian Story," to the following passage of which the quotation may be supposed to have a general resemblance.

. . . . . "He bound
The fillets like a coronet around
Her brows, and bade her smile and be a queen.'

NOTES TO THE FOURTH DUAN.

Page 64, line 8.

"*The blazing sun . . .*"

The standard of the Finii.

Page 64, line 10.

"——*Morni's host*——"

Much contention existed at one period between the Finii and the tribe of Morni. Cumhal or Comhal was killed in a battle fought between them; a subsequent reconciliation, however, took place, and ever after the tribe of Morni was subservient to the Finii, both parties living in the utmost concord, and the former experiencing much kindness and attention from Finn Mac Comhal.

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